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MEASUREMENT OF CONCENTRATION OF WEALTH.

The very clever article on "Methods of Measuring the Concentration of Wealth," written by Mr. M. O. Lorenz, and appearing in the quarterly publications of the American Statistical Association for June, 1905, treats of a subject that is in need of more decisive treatment than has been given to it by those who have undertaken to express degrees of distribution as more or less uneven. Such an article as this would not have passed unnoticed by me, had he not referred to an article of mine devoted to one phase of the subject appearing in the Quarterly Publications for 1892-93, vol. iii, p. 141.

One reference to that old article by Mr. Lorenz compels me to dig up the article, to place it as I believe it should appear to those that are interested in measures of distribution.

My scheme was to classify wealth owners according to the amount of wealth individually owned by them, and to arrange the classes in progressive order, beginning at the top with the number of owners in the lowest wealth class and go on higher to the class owning the highest amount. Parallel with the column for the number of owners was the column for the total amount of wealth owned by each class.

The number of owners having been inserted in the column, it is apparent that there is a point on one side of which the number of owners of the smaller amounts balances the number of owners of the larger amounts on the other side. The addition of one owner to the number on one side of this median line is balanced by the addition of one owner to the number on the other side.

The place of the median line in the column for amount of wealth owned does not remain the same when the wealth possessed by each of these two added wealth owners is placed where it belongs, above and below the former median line; but this line, after the addition of the wealth, is pulled away from the place of the median line for number of owners, as projected into the scale on the extreme left, in the direction of the larger amounts.

The contention was that this pulling away of the median line for wealth owned from the median line for number of wealth owners constituted a measure of inequality of distribution and permitted the degree of inequality to be expressed by a single number representing the difference between the two median lines as projected into the scale.

It is in the very nature of the principle, concisely expressed above, that a doubling of the column for wealth owned will double the de-

gree of inequality of distribution. This was in accordance with my theory, and was very plainly in my mind at the time my article of a dozen years ago was written. It seems, however, that Mr. Lorenz has misunderstood my article to this extent. My hypothesis had in view such a result as the doubling of a degree of inequality by the doubling of the column of amount of wealth owned. Even if this were not in my mind, the principle was there, nevertheless.

Concerning this Mr. Lorenz writes: "The error in this measure lies in the fact that the distance between the medians varies not only with the degree of concentration (for it does this), but also with changes in the total wealth. Let us suppose each individual's wealth in the above case is doubled. The two medians would now be \$17 and \$19.65, and their difference \$2.65, showing an increase in concentration, but by hypothesis the relative position of the numbers has not changed."

If there is any hypothesis that the relative position of the numbers has not changed, it was and is not mine, nor is it a part of this scheme for measuring distribution. The contrary is true in both cases. A doubling of the degree of inequality which Mr. Lorenz obtains by multiplying the wealth column by 2 is precisely what is to be expected by hypothesis and arithmetical principle.

The foregoing is not to be regarded as in any degree objecting to Mr. Lorenz's thoughtful scheme of graphic presentation.

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FAMILY DESERTION.

Publications of the Committee on Social Research of the Charity Organization Society of the City of New York. No. I. In two parts. 200 pp., appendices and tables. 1905.

I. *Five hundred and Seventy-four Deserters and their Families.* By Lilian Brandt. New York City. 64 pp. 1905.

From material contributed by various charitable organizations, Miss Lilian Brandt, of the statistical division of the Charity Organization Society of the city of New York, has obtained valuable information as to the important features of the serious problem of family desertion.

Two earlier studies of this nature—one by Miss Smith of the Associated Charities of Boston in 1901, and the other by the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity in 1902—furnished facts and conclu-